THE

Christians WAY TO HEAVEN:

OR,

What He must do to be Saved?

By a Divine of the Church of *England.*

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My dear Friends

I *Here offer to you a plain Sermon in* Print. *that it may ſtay longer with you, than it could do by the* Preaching. *It does contain, in ſhort, the main Duties of our Holy Religion which we hope to be ſaved by, and which we ought at all Times to have preſent to our Minds. May the good* God *of Heaven bleſs it to your Edification, as, I Pray, he may do the reſt of the Endeavours of*

Your Faithful

Servant in

Chriſt Jeſus.

A Christian Way—
Answer to all Excu-
A Friendly Discourse
Duty of Compassion
The Grand Case
A Conference—
A Brief Treatise—
Tractatus de Vita—
Apologia

THE
Christians Way
TO
HEAVEN.

ACTS XVI. xxx, xxxi.

xxx. *Sirs, What must I do to be Saved?*
xxxi. *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be Saved, and thy House.*

WHEN the Apostle St. *Paul* and his Companion *Silas* had, upon account of the uproar of the Multitude against them, been commanded to Prison by the Magistrates, and had *their Feet made fast in the Stocks*; God Almighty was pleased to shew a very great Miracle for their Deliverance. For upon their *Praying and Singing Praises unto God, there was suddenly a very great Earth-quake, so that the Foundations of the Prison were shaken; and immediately all the Doors were opened, and every ones Bands were loosed.* This put the Keeper of the Prison into a violent Consternation, upon the supposed loss of his Prisoners; so that he would, had he not been prevented, have laid violent Hands upon himself. But his Fear abated upon St. *Paul's* assuring him they were all there, and the Sense of this miraculous Occurrence so awakened him into Religious Thoughts, that it put him upon enquiry

these good Men taught, that their Religion was from God who had done so great a Miracle in favour of it; he did heartily believe, that that Salvation of Mens Souls in another World which they Preached, would be the Lot of all those good Persons who followed the Doctrines they were Preachers of; but still he was ignorant of those Precepts he was to Practice in Order to this Happiness, and That was the Reason that with so great Earnestness he cried out; *Sirs, What must I do to be Saved?* That is, I have now a mind to be a Christian, and to enter into that Covenant with God, which he has been pleased to offer to Mankind by Jesus Christ; of the Truth of whose Mission, and the Sincerity of whose Promises I am verily perswaded; but I beseech you to inform me of the Conditions of this Covenant, which I am a perfect Stranger to, and to tell me what I am to do on my Part in order to attain that Happiness, which God promises to confer on his. To this the Apostles answer, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy House:* That is, you shall obtain this your desire of Everlasting Happiness, if you stedfastly believe, and sincerely practice the Precepts of that Religion, which was declared to the World by Jesus Christ; and which you shall learn by our Instruction. For it is plain, that by this the Apostles did not mean a bare belief, but a performance of the other Duties likewise recommended by the Gospel Dispensation. For in the next Words it is said, That *they spake unto him the Word of the Lord, and to all that were in his House*; ver. 32. That is, they instructed him in the Principles of the Christian Religion, and explained to him what he was to believe and practice in this Gospel Covenant, that he might be Partaker of those Promises he was desirous of.

Now in discoursing to you upon these Words, I shall draw up in a narrow Compass all the General Rules and Obligations of the Christian Religion, which will be useful for you upon these two Accounts.

First, Because by this you may see your whole Duty at one View, which will be serviceable to you, in reducing into an easie Method what you have Read and Heard in good Books and Sermons; and will be more especially useful to them, who have not Time, or Money, to Read, or Buy large Treatises on these Subjects.

Secondly, Because by having these Terms of Salvation re-

dencies, or uncomfortable Reflections upon Danger of your Miscarriage in a Future State; for when you fully understand upon what Conditions every Man may certainly be saved, you need not trouble your selves to wait for any particular Marks of Assurance, which after all, a Man may be deceived in. But no Man has Reason to distrust, that God Almighty will not Reward him with Eternal Happiness, when he is sure he has discharged those Conditions which God in his Holy Word has promised Eternal Happiness to.

Now these Conditions or Qualifications for Salvation, I shall reduce to as few Heads as conveniently I can, and speak to them in their Order.

I. *You cannot be saved, unless you believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the main Articles of Faith contained in it.* For the Scripture says expressly, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned*, Mark 18.16. Therefore you must believe, that there is * one only *a* Eternal, *b* Almighty, *c* All-wise, and *d* Merciful God, who Created *e* all Things by his Almighty Wisdom and Power, and Governs *f* them by his Providence; that he has sent his only Son Christ Jesus into the World to Redeem by his Blood *g*, the forfeited Souls of sinful Mankind; and you must believe, that there is the Holy Spirit *h* of God the Comforter, which our Saviour promised to send, which does continually put into our Mind, good Desires, does keep us from Temptations *i*, does sanctifie *k* all good Mens Hearts, and render them acceptable unto God. You must stedfastly believe, that the Holy Scriptures are the *l* inspired Word of God; and particularly, that the Miracles and Doctrines of our blessed Saviour were really true, and such as they are there Recorded to be. Now unless you cordially believe these Things, you can have no pretence to enter into Covenant with God in this Christian Dispensation.

I. Condition, *To believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith.*

* *Deut.* 4.25. 1 *Cor.* 8.4. *Isa.* 45. 5. *John* 17. 3. a *Isa.* 48. 12. *Gen.* 21. 33. 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. b *Gen.* 17. 1. *Mat.* 3. 9. *Eph.* 3. 20. c *Rom.* 16. 17. 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. *Job.* 11. 7. d *Exod.* 34. 6. *Luke* 1. 50. 2 *Cor.* 1. 3. e *Exod.* 31. 17. *Acts* 17. 24. f *For the Providence of God, see Psalm* 37. *Prov.* 11. 31. *Job* 36. 6. *Mat.* 6. 28. g *John* 8. 42. 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. *Eph.* 1. 7. h *Job.* 24. 16. *Rom.* 8. 14. 1 *John* 5. 14. 12 *Pet.* 2, 9. *Rom.* 8. 26. *Rev.* 12. 10. k *Tit.* 3. 5. 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. *l* 2 *Tim.* 3. 16. 2 *Pet.* 2. 21.

posed by Jesus Christ; for otherways you are *Infidels*, and though you should outwardly joyn your selves in Communion with Christ's Flock, yet you will receive no more Benefit by that, than if you were *Mahometans* or *Pagans*. Therefore in the first Place, you must take Care to have a firm Belief of these Things, and to *be always ready to give an Answer to every Man, that asketh you a Reason of the Hope that is in you*; that is, to believe the Doctrines of Christianity upon rational Grounds, not to stick to them only upon the Prejudice of your Education, but because upon full search and enquiry, you find all the Reason in the World to believe them. Whenever you find any unbelieving Thought to rise up in your Minds, which the Devil will never be wanting upon occasion to suggest; use your utmost endeavour to shake off that ungodly Doubt, by confronting it with some indubitable Truth, or by getting further Information of abler Christians; but above all by constant reading and studying God's Word, and by fervent Prayer to him to help your unbelief; for you may be assured, that ten to one more *Infidels* are made by a neglect of Reading the Scriptures, and of daily Prayers to God, than by all the poisoned Books and Discourses, which are levelled against our Religion. And I would have you observe further, (which is a great Argument for you to settle in your Hearts a firm Belief of all the Gospel Truths) that there is hardly any wickedness which Men commit, or any Sin they fall into, but it proceeds chiefly from some kind of Infidelity or other; because they do not rightly believe of the Providence of God, or his Justice, or Mercy, or Veracity, but have got into their Heads some fond Notion of their own concerning these Attributes, which may better agree with their vitious Lives, than that Idea which God has given of himself in his Holy Word. Therefore be sure to be well Principled, and to have true Notions of these Matters; use your utmost endeavours firmly to believe, and fully to understand all that the Holy Scriptures say concerning them; for this is the Foundation of all true Religion, and unless this be rightly laid, all the other Building, which may be raised afterwards, falls to the Ground and comes to nothing.

John 5. 39. *Acts* 17. 4. *Rom.* 15. 4.

II. Condition. *To a-*

II. *After the believing of the Gospel Truths; in the next Place in order to your*

Covenant with Christ, you must leave off gross and apparent Sins. For a Man whilst he lives a lewd and vicious Life, can have no hopes of Salvation; such, by the whole Tenour of the Gospel, being excluded from it. The Apostle St. *Paul* gives you a long Catalogue of such Sins, as are inconsistent with Salvation. *Now the Works of the Flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenness, Revellings, and such like; of which I tell you before, as I have told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*, Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21. Therefore, if you would have any hope of going to Heaven, you must leave off a wicked Course of Life; you must take Care to repent of, and to forsake such Sins as will shut you out from thence. You cannot expect to go thither, whilst you live in a State of Adultery or Uncleanness; if you are not just in your dealings, and do not make Satisfaction and Reparation for all the Wrongs and Injuries you have done; if you live in a course of Drunkenness; if you are guilty of prophane Swearing and Cursing; if you live Quarrelsomely and Contentiously with your Neighbours; if you be proud and haughty, malicious and revengeful. Therefore it behoves you, not only to be careful to avoid Drunkenness, Incontinency, and other fleshly Sins, but to divest your selves of Pride and Malice, and other Sins of the Mind; for these spiritual Vices are as much inconsistent with a State of Christianity as the fleshly; they do as much mischief in this World, and make a Man as unqualified for the other; and you may further take Notice, that the most wicked Beings of all God's Creation, I mean the Devils in Hell, have no Sins of the Flesh to answer for, and yet they shall undergo the most terrible Damnation for their Pride and Malice, and other Sins of the Mind; which too many Men do look upon, in themselves at least, as hardly any Sins at all.

III. *In order to your Salvation you must take Care not only to avoid a settled Course of Wickedness, or a Life of Viciousness, but to root out of your Hearts every single Sin ye find there.* There are a great many Men, that for the generality live good and vertuous

III. Condition. *To avoid every single Sin we know to be such.*

to part with all the rest to retain that. Thus there are several who can without any great difficulty refrain from Intemperance, or Covetousness, or Pride, or Contention, so they may but enjoy their Lust. To another Covetousness is the only Darling; and he can be content to be chast and sober, in hopes that God will excuse him from being hard and griping. Mistake not; God Almighty does expect to be loved with all the Mind, and all the Soul and all the Strength, *Mat.* 12. 30. *We must perfect Holiness in the fear of the Lord.* 2 Cor. 7. 1. *And we are taught, that he who shall keep the whole Law, and offend in one Point, he is guilty of all,* James 2. 10. That is, he shall as effectually be damned for that one Sin unrepented of, as if he had been guilty of many more Sins. Therefore do not Cheat your selves, and Fool your selves out of your precious Souls; by thinking you shall ever go to Heaven, by serving of God by halves. God Almighty will either have your whole Souls or none, he will never suffer you to make him a sharer with the Devil. Don't think it will avail you to say, it is but one Sin, for that one is fatal. For Sin to the Soul, is like a strong Poison to the Body, a drop of it is as killing as if you drank a Gallon. So that upon the whole, you have no way to secure your Salvation; but by forsaking every known Sin, though never so small in your Opinion; if you know it to be Sin, you must know it to be damnable, and that there is no Salvation to be expected whilst you continue in it. Therefore you must frequently examine your Consciences, and strictly survey and look into every Corner of your Soul, and whatever Sin you find there dispatch it without any Quarter; and do not put it off from Time to Time, as being unwilling to part with it, but take the first opportunity to Repent of and amend it; beg God Almighties Pardon for the former Commission of it, and his Grace for the Future to avoid it.

IV. Condition. To *Practice all the Gospel Virtues.*

IV. *The next step you must make in order to be saved, is to Practice the Gospel Virtues; which you find laid down in Gods Word for your Christian Performance.* For Christianity does not consist only of a few Negative Precepts, it does not oblige you just only to avoid Sin, but it engages you to the Performance of several Virtues and Graces; which unless you make your selves Masters of, you cannot be qualified for Heaven. Don't be cheat-

good Man, as when they say, *such a one is a good Man, because he does no Body any harm*; as if 'twas enough to be Religious, not to be mischievous. For a Man may abstain from this, upon account of good Nature and a Gentleman-like Education: And besides, this singly of it self is no great matter of Virtue, and is no more then what Stocks and Stones and tame Beasts may pretend to, for they likewise do no Body any harm: But true Christianity has in it more Spirit and Vigour, it is a Life of Action; and those who pretend to it, must not only avoid all ill Things, but they must do a great many good ones.

You must Learn therefore to Practice the Christian Grace of *Humility*; you must have as mean Thoughts as possible you can of your selves, upon Consideration that all you can boast of does proceed from the free Gift of God; you must not despise the meanest of your fellow-Creatures, but rather glorifie your gracious God, who has been pleased to bestow on you more liberal Talents; and lastly, you must shew to all a meek and courteous Behaviour; considering that they proceed from the same common Stock, and do partake of the same common Nature with you, and that Christ condescended to Die for the poorest as well as the greatest. *Humility*, Mat. 20. 26.

You must likewise adorn your Souls with *Patience*, and bear your Afflictions with a true Christian Magnanimity and Fortitude; and with a perfect Resignation to the good Will of God, considering that he sends those Sufferings out of a pure fatherly kindness and Correction, to wean us from the World, and to bring us nigher unto him; to give us Demonstration of our Legitimacy in Grace, and that we are not Bastards but Sons. *Patience*, Luke 21. 19. James 5. 8. 1 Pet. 2. 20.

We must Learn likewise *to forgive our Enemies, to do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that dispitefully use us and persecute us*; considering that we have for this the express Command and Example of our blessed Lord, and that a meek and a peaceable Disposition is the greatest Ornament of a Christian, and does not only conduce to the Peace and Quiet of the World, but to a Mans own Satisfaction; whilst Malice and Revenge do rack the Soul with continual Torment, and such Society *Forgiveness, and Love of our Enemies*, Mat. 5. 24.

Charity of Opinion, 1 Cor. 13. 4.

You must likewise endeavour to make your selves eminent in other Acts of *Charity.* You must be charitable in your Opinions and Censures of other Men: You must not be too forward in beleiving slanderous Reports, nor too busie in relating other Mens failures; you must have a care of denouncing Damnation upon all who differ in Religious Matters from you, but let your Love go with them with whom your Opinion cannot.

Charity of Relief, Deut. 15. 7. Psalm. 41. 1. Luke 14. 13. Prov. 28. 27

You must according to your Abilities be liberal to the Poor, considering that God has made us, who are in a better Capacity, Stewards for them; that the Scriptures assures us, *That he who is merciful to the Poor, lendeth to the Lord*; and therefore we may be sure, when God Almighty has engaged himself to be our Debtor, he will repay us with the greatest Interest.

Mortification and Self-denial, Mat. 5. 29. Rom. 8. 13. Col. 3. 5.

Our Religion obliges us yet further to a higher Duty, and which does run a little more contrary to the stream of our natural Inclinations, and that is to Mortification and Self-denial. And to mortifie our Members, and to deny all Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, *Tit.* 2. 12. is not without Reason enjoyned us. For though we may live an ordinary Life of Virtue without undergoing these severer Duties, yet it is very difficult to do it; and if we do not restrain and abridge our Appetites oftentimes in lawful Things, they will be apt to grow so Head-strong, that we shall hardly be able to keep them from unlawful. Besides, since God Almighty has design'd this World only as a State of Probation for the other, where there are none of these sensual Enjoyments to be found, it is but reasonable we should be something weaned from those lower Pleasures, that we may be able to relish those high and exalted ones which are designed for us hereafter. These, and all other Virtues which are perscribed to you by God's Word, you must exercise your selves in, in this your Christian Warfare; you must run this Race which God has set before you, if you would obtain the Crown which is laid up for you. And to do this the better, let this be your constant Rule; to do every Thing with readiness, which you

fore Men, that is, to endeavour to shew the best Example in Religion, which without Ostentation and Vanity you possibly can; and lastly, to do all the good you can in your Generation, if you do this sincerely, tho' it may be with a great deal of Imperfection, God Almighty in his goodness will accept this imperfect for a compleat Obedience.

V. *Next in order to your Salvation you must be diligent in observing the Ordinances, which either Christ himself or his Holy Church hath instituted for the furtherance of Godliness and true Religion.* Therefore you must be constant in the Duty of Prayer, as well Publick as Private. You must at least twice every Day, Morning and Evening, betake your selves to your Closets, or some private Place of your Houses; and there Pray to God to forgive you whatever Offences you have committed, and to beg his Grace and Protection for the Time to come. If you neglect this Duty, you live the Lives of perfect *Heathens*, you quite put your selves out of Gods Favour and Care which good Christians lay claim to, and have nothing but your bare Baptism to distinguish you from the Prophane *Pagans*.

V. Condition. To *observe the Ordinances of Christ and his Holy Church.*

Publick Prayer, Isa. 50. 7. Luke 18. 8. Acts 3. 1. Mat. 21. 13. *as well as Private.*

Morning and Evening, Mat. 7. 7. Luke 18. 1. Rom. 12. 12. Eph. 6. 18. Psalm. 119. 164.

You must likewise, at least upon Sundays and Holidays attend the *Publick Service of the Church*; for the Apostle Taxes the forsaking the Assemblies as a great fault, *Heb.* 10. 25. And in the Publick Congregation we may expect our Prayers to be sooner heard, when they are joyned with the united Prayers of so many good People.

Benefit of Publick Prayer, John ch. 3. 2 Chron. 20.

You must likewise be very diligent and attentive *in hearing the Word of God*, as it is Preached by his Ministers, for the Scripture tell us, *That Faith cometh by Hearing*, Rom. 10. 17. And therefore you ought not to slight this great means of your Salvation. Neither must you indulge your selves in silly Fancies in liking, or not liking your Ministers Phrase or Action, but you ought chiefly to mind the Substance of

Hearing the Word and that from our own Ministers, Rom. 10. 17. Luke 8. 18.

meaneſt Miniſter of the Goſpel, if you hear him with that ſoberneſs you ought; for let me tell you, the fault of your not proficing does not ſo much lie in unedifying Miniſters, as in unpractiſing Congregations. Nor muſt you run about, gadding to other Churches to hear others you are better pleaſed with; for beſides, the great fault you commit in diſcouraging your own Miniſters endeavours; you cannot expect that God ſhould afford the ſame Bleſſing to the hearing of the Word out of the Method he has preſcribed, and from thoſe to whom he has not given Charge of your Souls.

Reading the Holy Scriptures, Mat. 22. 29. Joh. 5. 39. Acts 17. 11.

You muſt likewiſe be conſtant in *Reading Gods Word*, or getting it read to you, for this is the moſt conſiderable Motive you can make uſe of to a good Life: Becauſe then you here God Almighty himſelf ſpeaking to your Conſciences, whoſe Authority will prevail much more with you than our Preaching; and beſides, by this you may examine the Doctrine which we Teach, and ſee that we do not impoſe upon you, but Preach to you what is agreeable to that excellent Rule.

Frequent Receiving the Lords Supper.

You muſt furthermore, as frequently, as conveniently you may, Receive the *Holy Sacrament of our Lords Body and Blood*; for whilſt you Live in a conſtant neglect of this, you have little pretence to be Chriſtians, becauſe our bleſſed Lord has commanded all his Followers to *do this in remembrance of him*; and if you will not thus remember him, and ſhew this Token your Communion with him and his Church; you do in effect deny your Baptiſmal Vow, and turn Renegado's to the Religion of Chriſt. This is the Oath of Fidelity to your heavenly Prince, which he has required of you frequently to renew, which if you refuſe, you caſt of all Allegiance and Subjection to him, and turn Rebels to his Adminiſtration. Whilſt you neglect this, you deprive your ſelves of the Grace of God's Holy Spirit, which is plentifully conveyed by a due receiving this Holy Sacrament; you leave your Souls defenceleſs againſt all the Aſſaults of the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil which may attack them; and defraud your ſelves of the Seal of Gods Pardon for Sin, which is fully given to all worthy Receivers.

You must also religiously observe all the *Feasts and Fasts* of the Church, not only by coming to Church on Sundays, Fast-days, and Holidays, but by dedicating besides, some considerable part of them to your Religious Exercises in Private. *Religious observing Sundays and Holidays*

You must lastly take Care to bring your Children, as soon as may be, to partake of the *Holy Sacrament of Baptism*, not at Home, as is the vain and irreligious Fashion of some, but to Church where the Sacrament may be more solemnly administred, and where your Children may partake of the joynt Prayers of the Congregation of God's People: And when you have done so, you must see them well instructed in the Principles of the Christian Religion, and that they come to take their Religion upon themselves, which their Sureties in Baptism promised they should, when the Bishop does administer the Sacred Ordinance of Confirmation. *Bringing Children to Publick Baptism.* *Catechism and Confirmation.*

VI. *Lastly, in order to Salvation, you must take Care to Exercise another Duty, which is particularly recommended by our Saviour, as a guard to all the rest; and that is Watchfulness*, Mat. 24. 42. and 25. 14, Acts 20. 31. Though you have truly repented of your Sins, and got into a Habit of Virtue and a Religious Course of Life; yet if you have not a great guard upon your selves, you will insensibly relapse again into your former Condition. For you must needs think that the Devil will use the utmost of his spight and cunning, and will play his main Batteries upon those, who have forsaken his Cause, and are obedient to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. The Holy Scripture informs you, that he goes about *like a roaring Lyon, seeking whom he may devour*, 1 Pet. 5. 8. And you may reasonably suppose, that he will devour none so easily, as those Christians who live off of their Guard. Therefore when you have forsaken a Course of Sin, and are arrived at a tolerable Perfection of Virtue and Godliness, don't sit down secure, as if there was nothing more to be done; for in your Christian Warfare there is Work enough to go forwards in, as long as you live. It requires a great deal of Diligence and Circumspection to keep VI. Condition. *To Watch against all Temptations and Failures.*

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VI. *Lastly. in order to Salvation, you must take Care to Exercise another Duty, which is particularly recommended by our Saviour, as a guard to all the rest; and that is Watchfulness*, Mat. 24. 42. and 25. 14, Acts 20. 31. Though you have truly repented of your Sins, and got into a Habit of Virtue and a Religious Course of Life; yet if you have not a great guard upon your selves, you will insensibly relapse again into your former Condition. For you must needs think that the Devil will use the utmost of his spight and cunning, and will play his main Batteries upon those, who have forsaken his Cause, and are obedient to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. The Holy Scripture informs you, that he goes about *like a roaring Lyon, seeking whom he may devour*, 1 Pet. 5. 8. And you may reasonably suppose, that he will devour none so easily, as those Christians who live off of their Guard. Therefore when you have forsaken a Course of Sin, and are arrived at a tolerable Perfection of Virtue and Godliness, don't sit down secure, as if there was nothing more to be done; for in your Christian Warfare there is Work enough to go forwards in, as long as you live. It requires a great deal of Diligence and Circumspection to keep

VI. Condition. *To Watch against all Temptations and Failures.*

all Temptations and to maintain your Integrity in a vitious Age when Wickedness is oftimes applauded, and Vertue meets with so great discouragements. But there is hardly any standing at a stay in a Religious Course; you will either go *forwards* or *backwards*, and therefore be *watchful*, that you do not move the wrong Way; and this you cannot be sure of, unless, as long as you live, you be improving in Vertue. I do not doubt, but many Christians are in a salvable State, that are subject to many Imperfections and Failures; but, as they live on, they must still go forwards in the Conquest of these. A sincere Penitent who is just come out of a flagitious Course of Life, has enough to do to fence against the gross Sins he has so much been accustom'd to; but God expects from one, who has been long habituated to a Course of Godliness, that he should be very watchful against *all* human Imperfections whatsoever. Such a one must not think so easily to be excused from Sins of Ignorance, when after a long Exercise in hearing and reading God's Word, he might have better informed himself of his Duty; he cannot so well plead Sins of Infirmity, when his Nature has very considerably lost its bvass to Sin by a long Course of Vertue. Therefore good Christians must be going forwards in a State of Virtue as long as they live, they must be still bettering and improving their Natures, more and more informing their Understandings in Religious Truths, and rectifying their Wills; they will find Work enough to watch against all imprudent and offensive Actions, against idle Words, against sudden Anger, against coldness and some involuntary Excursions in Devotion. And for an incouragement to this Progress, God Almighty will not only Reward them with a bare *saving their Souls*, but will liberally bestow on such the Ten Talents, *Luke* 19. 24. He will advance them according to their Improvement in Piety, to one of the highest Thrones in the Heavenly Kingdom; *For one Star differeth from another Star in Glory*, 1 Cor 15. 41.

And now let me speak a Word or two, by way of Exhortation and Inference from what has been said.

First, Let me apply my self to the more mature and elderly Sort among you.

You have long since been instructed in the Principles of the Christian Religion, you have had the Catechetical Instructi-

Years, and therefore you ought not only to know your Duty, but to be considerable Proficients in it. It is a shame for you to be ignorant of those Christian Doctrines, which the Children are taught to understand; and then to Learn the Way to Heaven, when you have hardly Time perhaps before Death to do it in. Oh! What a killing Speech is it to hear a Man say, he did understand his Religion when he was Young? Wretched Sinner! What hast thou been doing all this Time? You that ought to have been the Teacher of Religion to others, dost thou want the very first Instructions of this Duty thy self? How canst thou answer it to God, to retain thy Trade, thy Debts, and every thing else in Mind, and only to have forgot thy Religion? If there be any such among you, get out of this wicked carelesness as soon as you can, apply your selves to the reading the Holy Scriptures and other good Books, come constantly to Church, and Mind what is there said, and be ashamed to continue in such Ignorance any longer.

As for you who have not been so very negligent as to forget your Duty, but yet nevertheless in despight of your Knowledge, and under Conviction of your own Consciences do live in constant breach of it; free your selves with all speed from this hazardous State, and venture not your Souls in a State of Sin, which you know to be damnable, one moment longer. How can you Answer it to the Mercy of God, to continue in a Course of Wickedness, when he has given you so much Time to Repent in? How can you answer it to your own Consciences, which are continually upbraiding you with a neglect of your Duty? How can you Answer it to your Children and Families, to whom you should give an Example of Piety and Religion; but you set them a Copy only of Prophaness and Wickedness?

As for those good Persons among you, who have been mindful of the one thing necessary, and taken Care for their Souls; who have acquainted themselves *what they are to do to be saved*, and have made their Practice conformable to their Knowledge; let me beseech you, my dear Brethren, to pay God your continual Thanks for this great measure of Grace bestowed upon you, to be modest and humble in your vertuous Accomplishments; and to ascribe all your spiritual Strength to the goodness of God, to endeavour more and more to improve in Grace, and like St. *Paul*, to forget those

wards before, and pressing towards the Mark, for the prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus, Phil. 3. 13. 14.

4. And for the close of all, Let me apply my self to the Younger sort among you.

Let me beseech you to bear in mind the good Instructions and Christian Information, which you receive from your Pastors and Friends in your Youth; and let what you Learn in those tender Years remain fresh in your Memories under the Hoary Head. Let me beseech you to enter upon a Religious Course of Life betimes, because now you have all the Advantages in the World to go forwards in it. You have no inveterate Habits, and old Customs of Sinning, to conflict with, which oftentimes render all the endeavours of a riper Age, ineffectual. Your Nature now is tender and pliable, and as it takes its bent in this Age, it does for the most part stand for ever. Therefore this is the Time to give it a vertuous Impression, and a true Byass to Holiness, before the Devil takes Possession of it, and warps it the contrary way. Think how pleasing and acceptable to God an early Piety is, and what an affront it is to Dedicate only the Dregs of your Life to his Service, and the Flower of it to the Devil.

Endeavour to settle in your Minds now you are Young, a true Tast of Godliness, and of the Excellency of the Christian Religion; which above all other Religions which ever were in the World, does more especially recommend it. Weigh in your Hearts seriously the admirable Rewards which it promises to those who perform the Conditions of the Gospel, and be not led aside by the Vanities of this World, to forfeit those exceeding Glories of the other. And when you are fully informed, *What you must do to be Saved*, take Care that you do not miss of that Salvation, whereof you know the Methods of obtaining.

FINIS.